



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials FY 2003 – 2004 Report

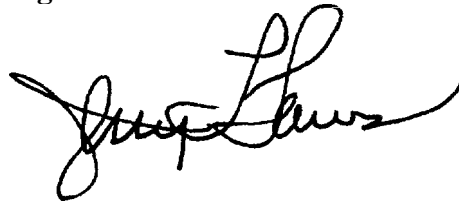
Report of the
Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials
FY 2003 – 2004

This report is respectfully submitted in accordance with the statute (38 U.S.C. § 2401) which established the Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials.

The Committee serves as an advisory body to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs through the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs on issues involving the operations of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), the State Cemetery Grants Program, the provision of headstones and markers, the provision of Presidential Memorial Certificates, and related burial benefits. The Committee assists the Secretary in assuring that plans and programs are meeting the needs of the Nation's veterans and their eligible family members, and meeting the mandate to maintain national cemeteries as national shrines.

This report covers fiscal years (FY) 2003 and 2004. The Committee extends its appreciation to the National Cemetery Administration management and staff for their continued support of this Committee in the performance of its mission. The Committee is dedicated to providing maximum assistance and support to NCA and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in the accomplishment of this most vital mission.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry L. Laws", with a stylized, flowing script.

Jerry L. Laws
Chair

May 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VA Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials is a statutory committee authorized by Congress in Public Law 93-43 and codified in 38 U.S.C. § 2401. The Committee advises the Secretary of Veterans Affairs through the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs on issues involving the operations of NCA, the State Cemetery Grants Program, the provision of headstones, markers, Presidential Memorial Certificates (PMCs), and related burial benefits.

The Advisory Committee's charter requires that the Committee provide periodic reports and recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to Congress. This report covers Committee activities and recommendations for FY 2003 and 2004.

Advisory Committee Meetings

During the period covered by this report, the Committee held four meetings. The first meeting was held in the Washington, DC, area, October 29 – 31, 2002, where members received briefings by NCA senior leaders on the status of new national cemeteries, expansion of existing national cemeteries, State veterans cemeteries funded by State Cemetery Grants, current legislation, historic preservation, Millennium Act reports, budget, and NCA's volunteer program. They also toured Loudon Park National Cemetery and Baltimore National Cemetery to observe NCA's historic preservation efforts and placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

During the second meeting held in Milwaukee, WI, April 30 – May 1, 2003, members toured Wood National Cemetery to observe the gravesite renovation project funded through NCA's National Shrine Commitment initiative. Additionally, the Committee toured Southern Wisconsin State Veterans Cemetery and discussed the partnership between VA and Wisconsin State veterans programs. The meeting also included discussion on operations of national cemeteries, the impact of National Shrine Commitment funding, implementation of operational standards for national cemeteries, VA's State Cemetery Grants Program, current legislation, and the President's FY 2004 budget request for VA and NCA.

The third meeting, held in Washington, DC, November 5 - 6, 2003 included briefings by NCA senior leaders on the status of new national cemeteries, expansion of existing national cemeteries, State cemeteries funded by State Cemetery Grants, current legislation, field operations, and the NCA budget. Members placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns and toured Alexandria National Cemetery.

The fourth meeting was held in San Francisco, CA, May 5-6, 2004, where the Committee received updates on field operations, outreach efforts, and new construction. The Committee also toured San Francisco and Golden Gate National Cemeteries and conducted a site visit at Memorial Service Network V.

Committee Recommendations

Committee deliberations and recommendations during this period addressed issues and activities related to the goals of NCA's Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: Ensure that the burial needs of veterans and their eligible family members are met.

Goal 2: Provide veterans and their families with symbolic expressions of remembrance.

Goal 3: Ensure that national cemeteries are maintained as national shrines dedicated to preserving our Nation's history, nurturing

patriotism, and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans have made.

Goal 4: Provide One VA world-class service to veterans and their families through the effective management of people, technology, processes, and financial resources.

- **Other Areas of Committee Interest**

The Committee expressed its desire to receive more information about recruitment and hiring of new employees, especially from underrepresented groups and economically depressed areas of the country.



San Francisco, CA Committee Meeting May 2004

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Committee expresses its appreciation to Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, the Honorable J.W. Nicholson, other senior NCA leadership, NCA Central Office staff, and the cemetery directors for their support and cooperation during the period covered by this Report. All concerned have been gracious in supplying timely and relevant information to the Committee, arranging meetings, and ensuring Committee members were well-informed on pertinent issues in order to carry out their responsibility of providing thoughtful and useful advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

VA Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials is a statutory committee authorized by Congress in Public Law 93-43 (June 18, 1973), codified under 38 U. S. C. § 2401.

The Committee serves as an advisory body to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs through the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs on issues involving the operations of NCA; the State Cemetery Grants program; the provision of headstones and markers; Presidential Memorial Certificates; and related burial benefits. The Committee assists the Secretary in assuring that plans and programs are meeting the needs of the Nation's veterans and their eligible family members and meeting the mandate to maintain national cemeteries as national shrines. The Committee is comprised of members of the public with a variety of backgrounds and knowledge sufficient to provide adequate advice and guidance to the Secretary. Committee members are representatives of veteran service organizations, military retirees, and business and community leaders. Appointments for regular members may be for one, two, or three years. In addition, there are three ex-officio members, one-each appointed from the American Battle Monuments Commission, the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior, and the Department of the Army's Arlington National Cemetery. Current membership on the Committee includes 15 regular members and three ex-officio members. The Committee usually meets twice a year, with one meeting in the Washington, DC, area, and the other meeting outside of Washington, usually at an NCA field site.

More information about VA and its services can be found at <http://www.va.gov>. Additional information about NCA may be found at <http://www.cem.va.gov>. More information about VA's Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials and its activities can be found on the General Services Administration web site on advisory committees at <http://fido.gov/facadatabase/default.asp>.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

FY 2003 – 2004

(October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2004)

Committee members are appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Appointees are drawn from a range of expertise to provide viewpoints from various perspectives. Appointments are also considered to achieve geographic, gender, ethnic, and military service diversity.

October 29 - 31, 2002

The Advisory Committee held its first meeting of FY 2003 in Washington, DC, at VA Central Office (VACO). Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Vincent Barile hosted the meeting. Percy Butler, Chair, presided over the meeting. Prior to the formal meeting, NCA hosted an orientation for seven new members on October 28.

At the formal meeting, members received briefings by NCA senior leaders on the status of new national cemeteries, expansion of existing national cemeteries, State veterans cemeteries funded by State Cemetery Grants, current legislation, Millennium Act reports, budget, and NCA's volunteer program. Sara Leach, NCA's historian, also briefed the Committee on historic preservation efforts.

VA Secretary Anthony Principi addressed the Committee and presented new members with certificates of appointment.

The Committee toured Loudon Park and Baltimore National Cemetery to observe NCA's historic preservation efforts and

November 5 - 6, 2003

placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

April 30 – May 1, 2003

The Committee's second meeting of FY 2003 was held in Milwaukee, WI. Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs J.W. Nicholson hosted the meeting. Percy Butler, Chair, presided over the meeting. The meeting included discussion on operations of national cemeteries, the impact of National Shrine Commitment funding, implementation of operational standards for national cemeteries, VA's State Cemetery Grants Program, current legislation, and the President's FY 2004 budget request for VA and NCA. George Webb, director of Memorial Service Network (MSN) IV, briefed the Committee on his duties and current issues facing the MSN.

Committee Members toured Wood National Cemetery to observe the gravesite renovation project funded through NCA's National Shrine Commitment initiative. Additionally, the Committee toured Southern Wisconsin State Veterans Cemetery and discussed the partnership between VA and Wisconsin State veterans programs with Wisconsin officials.

VA Deputy Secretary Leo McKay, Jr., addressed the Committee and praised their work.

The Committee's first meeting of FY 2004 was held in Washington, DC, at VA Central

Office. Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs J.W. Nicholson hosted the meeting. Jerry Laws, Chair, presided over the meeting. Members were provided briefings by NCA senior leaders on the status of new national cemeteries, expansion of existing national cemeteries, headstones and markers, State cemeteries funded by State Cemetery Grants, current legislation, field operations, the NCA budget, performance measurements and operational standards, and efforts to catalogue memorials throughout NCA.

VA Secretary Anthony Principi addressed the Committee and presented new members with certificates of appointment.

The Committee placed a wreath and toured Alexandria National Cemetery.

May 5 – 6, 2004

The Advisory Committee held its second meeting of FY 2004 in San Francisco, CA. Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs J.W.

Nicholson hosted the meeting. Jerry Laws, Chair, presided over the meeting.

The meeting included updates of field operations, the budget process and the Millennium Act.

The Committee toured San Francisco and Golden Gate National Cemeteries to view National Shrine Commitment work. Members also conducted a site visit to MSN V where they received briefings on the functions and duties of MSN staff members.



Golden Gate National Cemetery

COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee made a number of recommendations that relate directly to NCA's Strategic Planning Goals.

Goal 1: Ensure that the burial needs of veterans and eligible family members are met.

Experience and recent historical data show that about 80 percent of those interred in national cemeteries resided within 75 miles of the cemetery at time of death. From this experience, NCA considers eligible veterans to have reasonable access if a burial option (whether for casketed remains or cremated remains) is available within 75 miles of the veteran's place of residence.

NCA determines the percent of veterans served by existing national and State veterans' cemeteries within a reasonable distance (75 miles) of their residence by analyzing census data on the veteran population.

In order to ensure that burial options are provided for all eligible veterans and their family members, NCA is developing new national cemeteries to serve veterans in the areas of Atlanta, GA; Detroit, MI; Miami, FL; Pittsburgh, PA; and Sacramento, CA. Pub. L. 108-109, the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish six

new national cemeteries in areas not served by a national cemetery. They are: Philadelphia, PA.; Birmingham, AL; Jacksonville, FL; Bakersfield, CA; Greenville/Columbia, SC; and Sarasota, FL. NCA will expand existing national cemeteries by completing phased development projects in order to make additional gravesites and/or columbaria available for interments. National cemeteries that will close due to depletion of grave space will be identified to determine the feasibility of extending the service period of a cemetery by the acquisition of adjacent or contiguous land, or by the construction of columbaria.

Another method of providing burial options to veterans and their families is through VA's State Cemetery Grants Program. This program was established in 1978 to complement NCA by assisting states in establishing new State-operated veterans cemeteries or improving existing cemeteries.



Future Home of Georgia National Cemetery

Committee Recommendation 1.1: The Committee endorses the continued use of the 75-mile service area standard and the establishment of a veteran population threshold for development of new national cemeteries meeting.

NCA Response: NCA continues to employ a policy to pursue the development of new national cemeteries in areas where veteran population is concentrated and where no burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery exists within 75 miles. The 75-mile service area standard is based on substantial historical data which indicates that the overwhelming majority of those buried in national cemeteries resided within 75 miles of the cemetery at the time of their death. In addition, for the past 20 years the development of new national cemeteries has been based on demographic studies of the veteran population in order to determine which geographic areas contain the largest

number of unserved veterans. The most recent study, which included data from the 2000 Census established a veteran population threshold of 170,000 for consideration for a new national cemetery. NCA also believes that fundamental program policy should be reexamined on a periodic basis. To that end NCA will soon begin a comprehensive program evaluation of current burial benefits and services provided to veterans and their families. The current 75-mile service area standard as well as the 170,000 veteran population threshold will be examined as part of that evaluation to assess how well the current policy is serving veterans.

Committee Recommendation 1.2: The Committee endorses efforts by NCA to permanently authorize the State Cemetery Grants Program in legislation.

NCA Response: Pub. L. 108-183, Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, Section 503, made

authorization of the State Cemetery Grants Program permanent on December 16, 2003.

Committee Recommendation 1.3: The Committee strongly supports NCA's efforts regarding long-range planning for the next 50 years.

NCA Response: NCA completed data collection and analysis of the number and characteristics of the veteran population through 2050. This demographic data will

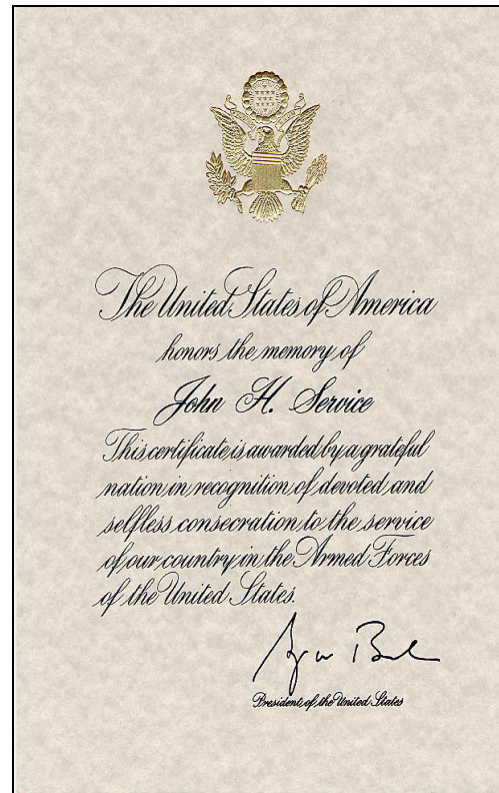
be used in NCA's long-range strategic planning to meet the burial needs of veterans.

Goal 2: Provide veterans and their families with symbolic expressions of remembrance.

NCA provides veterans and their families with symbolic expressions of remembrance in several ways: headstones, markers or niche covers to mark the individual resting place of a veteran and Presidential Memorial Certificates (PMCs) for family and friends of deceased veterans to honor their memory and their military service.

NCA continues to furnish headstones and markers for graves of eligible persons in national, State, and other public and private cemeteries. Delivery of this benefit is not dependent on interment in a national cemetery. More than 70 percent of all headstones and markers are furnished for veterans graves in other than Federal or State veterans cemeteries.

The PMC Program was initiated in March 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and has been continued by all subsequent Presidents. A PMC is an engraved certificate, bearing the signature of the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. The Certificates are provided to the families and friends of deceased veterans.



Presidential Memorial Certificate

Committee Recommendation 2.1: The Committee endorses the legislative proposal to enable VA to provide a government headstone or marker to mark the grave of eligible veterans who died after November 1990 regardless of the presence of a privately purchased marker.

NCA Response: Public Law 107-103, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001, was enacted December 27, 2001. It included section 502, which created a five-year pilot program to allow VA to provide a government headstone or marker for already marked veterans' graves for those who died on or after December 27, 2001. The law required VA to submit a report to Congress at the end of the five-year pilot recommending

whether or not the program should be extended (Amended by Public Law 107-330, which changed the effective date of eligibility to September 11, 2001).

VA transmitted a draft bill to Congress on April 25, 2003, that included a provision to allow VA to provide a second marker back to November 1990.

During the 108th Congress, First Session, the provision was introduced on behalf of VA in Senate (S. 1133). During mark up it became a provision in S. 1132. It was not introduced in

the House and was not enacted during the first session. As of September 30, 2004, no action had been taken on this provision in the second session of the 108th Congress.

Committee Recommendation 2.2: The Committee endorses the legislative proposal to increase the burial plot allowance paid to State veterans cemeteries to \$300 for each veteran interred.

NCA Response: VA transmitted a draft bill to Congress on April 25, 2003, that included a provision to authorize payment of the burial plot allowance to states for each veteran interred in a state veterans cemetery.

Public Law 108-183, The Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, was enacted on December 16, 2003. It included section 501, which amends sections 2303(b) and 2307 of Title 38, United States Code, to authorize payments of the burial plot allowance to states for each veteran, including those that died from a

service-connected disability or disabilities, interred in a state veterans cemetery at no cost to the veteran's estate or survivors. Payments may be made for burials conducted on or after December 16, 2003. Previously, VA was only authorized to pay a state a \$300 plot allowance for: (1) certain eligible wartime veterans; and (2) certain peacetime veterans who were discharged for disability, were in receipt of VA compensation or pension, or died in a VA facility. As of September 30, 2004, VA is using its new authority.

Committee Recommendation 2.3: The Committee recommends that NCA provide State Veterans Cemetery Directors with procedures and available NCA assistance to establish eligibility for burial in the absence of documentation.

NCA Response: In December 2003, the State Cemetery Grants Service sent all State veterans cemeteries information about NCA's Hub Cemetery, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, in St. Louis. NCA advised the states that Jefferson Barracks is able to expedite the verification of military service

for the purpose of determining eligibility for burial. The cemetery has established procedures to make sure the process works as smoothly as possible. NCA attached documents that provided procedures to be used in contacting Jefferson Barracks.

Committee Recommendation 2.4: The Committee endorses the electronic bugle program to enhance the provision of military funeral honors and requests that the Committee be informed of purchase availability when appropriate.

NCA Response: Many cemeteries are using electronic bugles. Some cemeteries purchased these devices from their own

budget, while many have been purchased by various veteran service organizations.

Goal 3: Ensure that national cemeteries are maintained as national shrines dedicated to preserving our Nation's history, nurturing patriotism, and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans have made.

NCA will continuously strive to maintain the appearance of national cemeteries as national shrines so that bereaved family members are comforted when they come to the cemetery for the interment, or later to visit the grave(s) of their loved one(s). To achieve this goal, NCA must maintain occupied graves and developed acres in a manner befitting their stature as national shrines. Improvements in the appearance of burial grounds and historic structures are also required for NCA to fulfill its national shrine commitment.

Using a customer satisfaction survey, NCA will continue to obtain feedback from

veterans, their families, and other customers to ascertain how they perceive the quality of the appearance of national cemeteries.

NCA maintains a variety of memorials, including memorial walks, and monuments from all major war periods beginning with the Civil War. The graves and grounds of a national cemetery are an appropriate memorial and serve as a lasting tribute and memorial to veterans and their families. National cemeteries may also play a role in educating and inspiring others and memorials are a way to accomplish this goal.



Golden Gate National Cemetery

Committee Recommendation 3.1: The Committee endorses NCA's efforts to preserve and expand the use of vacant lodges by increasing outreach to museums, historic preservation organizations and community groups of volunteers as tenants of these properties.

NCA Response: Cemeteries have actively sought tenants from museums, historic preservation organizations and community groups of volunteers for vacant lodges and NCA continues to pursue this effort. One example of success in this area is the current enhanced use lease between Mound

City National Cemetery (Mound City, IL) and a local historic preservation group. In return for use of the cemetery lodge as a veterans museum the group will renovate the historic lodge structure.

Committee Recommendation 3.2: The Committee recommends that NCA continue to pursue full funding of the national shrine commitment, in order to meet its five-year plan to bring every national cemetery up to shrine status.

NCA will continue to plan for the resources needed to address the long-standing deferred maintenance needs identified in the Study on Improvements to Veterans Cemeteries. This study identified 928 repair projects at a cost of \$280 million. By the end of FY 2004, NCA completed 89 projects and work had begun on 151 additional projects with an estimated cost of \$77 million. The funding included in the FY 2005 appropriations bill will allow NCA to continue to make steady progress in improving the appearance of VA's national cemeteries. The 2005 budget includes \$23 million for cemetery improvement projects.

The projects include raising, realigning and cleaning headstones and markers; renovating turf in burial sections; and repairing cemetery infrastructure including roads, buildings, irrigation systems, and historic structures. In addition, in FY 2004, NCA put in place an Organizational Assessment and Improvement Program to ensure accountability for managing to results, directing resources to areas most in need of improvement and assessing progress toward meeting the national shrine commitment. Each national cemetery will be evaluated through site visits on a cyclical basis.

Committee Recommendation 3.3: The Committee recommends that NCA consider enlarging the scope and responsibilities of NCA to include more emphases on memorials, history-inspiring patriotism, museums, and imparting an appreciation of veterans and their role in American history.

NCA Response: NCA hired two full-time historians in 2001 and 2002 to place more emphasis on NCA's historical role. The video Landscapes of Honor and Sacrifice, a Civil War Cemetery teaching curriculum

and exhibits are among the products created by NCA to increase public awareness. NCA will also complete a system-wide memorial inventory project in 2005.

Goal 4: Provide One VA world-class service to veterans and their families through the effective management of people, technology, processes, and financial resources.

This goal, based on the belief that dedicated, motivated, and knowledgeable employees are the foundation of quality customer service, encompasses all employee issues for which management bears responsibility, such as human resource systems, work

environment, and training. NCA is continually reviewing its internal structure and processes to identify potential improvements and re-engineering automated systems to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Committee Recommendation 4.1: The Committee recommends that NCA encourage and facilitate attendance of State Veteran Cemetery personnel at national and regional (network) meetings for the purpose of sharing best practices, improved work processes, and for soliciting mutually beneficial ideas and input.

NCA Response: State veterans cemetery personnel were invited to conferences hosted by networks II, III and IV in FY 2004.

Many State cemetery personnel attended those conferences in Atlanta, GA Indianapolis, IN and Denver, CO.

Committee Recommendation 4.2: The Committee endorses NCA's continued participation in veteran stand-downs, job fairs and its exploration of ways to make NCA employment opportunities a required presentation within the DOD separation briefings.

NCA Response: NCA is a strong advocate for creating employment opportunities for veterans. NCA has participated in the DOD Career Opportunity Networking Job Fair and the Military Officers Association of

American Career Job Fair to date. NCA has established an outstanding employment record of approximately 62.6 percent of veterans on the rolls for the period ending September 30, 2004.

Committee Recommendation 4.3: The Committee recommends that NCA establish a committee to review and recommend best practices in hiring, training, retaining, and career enhancement opportunities for its employees.

NCA Response: NCA developed a five-year workforce planning guide in 2003, addressing these issues. In addition, NCA established a Workforce Planning Council that will review and recommend best practices in hiring, training, retaining, and career enhancement opportunities for NCA

employees. On February 18 and 19, 2004, the Council met to establish a charter and identify priorities. A report was presented to the Under Secretary by the Workforce Planning Council and all the best practices were adopted by NCA.

Committee Recommendation 4.4: The Committee encourages NCA to be proactive and systematic in creating a volunteer organization to support national cemeteries around the country.

NCA Response: NCA works closely with the Office of Volunteer Services (VAVS) at VA Central Office. The VAVS Service Chiefs have communicated with VA's 167 health care facilities, in coordinating volunteer service opportunities in support of national cemeteries. NCA partners with VHA Medical Centers because they have procedures in place to ensure that enough

volunteers are hired and trained, while NCA tracks the hours that volunteers donate. VHA insures the volunteers against injury while they are working at VA national cemeteries. NCA is also working with VA's newly established Center for Faith-Based and Community initiatives to further develop volunteer opportunities.

Committee Recommendation 4.5: The Committee endorses VA's Town Hall Program and will provide support where appropriate.

NCA Response: NCA has completed 17 Town Hall meetings since the program's inception in 2004. The NCA Town Hall Coordinator contacts Committee members as soon as a Town Hall meeting is scheduled in their locations to advise them of the meeting and solicit their support in urging

veterans and other community members to attend. Committee members are invited to participate in all conference calls for Town Hall meetings in their local areas and can provide input for decisions that will affect the meetings and the participants.

Committee Recommendation 4.6: The Committee recommends that NCA centrally focus efforts to partner with colleges and universities to expand agronomy efforts to improve the appearance of national cemeteries.

NCA Response: NCA has assigned agronomists in each Memorial Service Network. The Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs initiated a program in 2003 for a prototype partnership with a local college in support of training cemetery field personnel in agronomy-related efforts. NCA supports the

Committee's recommendations, and NCA's Education and Training Section will research viable options and provide the Committee with a report of the findings and an assessment on implementing approaches. This report will be completed and forwarded by the end of the second quarter of FY 2005.

Committee Recommendation 4.7: The Committee recommends that NCA cemetery and MSN directors participate in VHA and VBA stakeholder support meetings.

NCA Response: Cemeteries and MSN offices that fall within the purview of local travel actively participate in these meetings.

Many of the larger cemeteries tend to coordinate stakeholder support meetings within their local communities.

OTHER AREAS OF COMMITTEE INTEREST

LEGISLATION

The Committee received information about legislation affecting veterans and their families and NCA overall as follows:

Enacted in December 2003, Public Law 108-183, the Veterans Benefit Act of 2003, contained provisions that extend burial benefits to New Philippine Scouts who lawfully reside in the U.S.; authorizes burial plot allowance to states for each veteran who was interred in a State veterans cemetery at no cost to the veteran's estate or survivors; allows a veteran's surviving spouse who married a non-veteran to be eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery, based on their marriage to the eligible veteran; and provides permanent authority for NCA's State Cemetery Grants.

Public Law 108 – 109, the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish six new national cemeteries in areas not served by a national cemetery. They are: Philadelphia, PA, Birmingham, AL, Jacksonville, FL, Bakersfield, CA, Columbia/Greenville, SC, and Sarasota, FL.

<p style="text-align: center;">COMMITTEE MEMBERS Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials FY 2003 and 2004</p>

Members of the Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials are appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and are asked to serve based on their knowledge and expertise in a variety of fields. There are also three ex-officio members on the Committee. These individuals represent other entities that also maintain national cemeteries – the National Park Service, the American Battle Monuments Commission, and Arlington National Cemetery.

James R. Adams
9/01/2003 – 8/31/2005
Texas

James Adams retired after 22 years of service as Director and Senior Army Instructor, JROTC Program, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, Texas. Prior to this, he served over 20 years in the U.S. Army in various capacities. Dr. Adams was also Professor in the Military Science Department, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama.

James E. Altmeyer
9/1/2004 – 8/31/2006
West Virginia

Mr. Altmeyer, a Vietnam War veteran, is a 1961 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York. Following his time at West Point, he went on to further his military training, including U.S. Army Airborne and Ranger schools. For the past 32 years, Mr. Altmeyer has been president and CEO of a family-owned business, Altmeyer Funeral Homes, Inc. During his tenure as the head of the firm, Altmeyer Funeral Homes has grown from three locations to 16 in Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. He is also president of Altmeyer Realty, a real estate holding company, and of Martin-Steadfast Insurance Company, a firm that specializes in pre-arranged funerals.

Stanford E. Brown
9/1/2004 – 8/31/2006
California

Brigadier General Brown, USAF, Retired, served in the Air Force for over three decades. He is a command pilot with more than 6,000 flying hours. He has qualified in and flown 15 first-line Air Force aircrafts. During the Vietnam War, he logged more than 800 combat flying hours. His military decorations include the Distinguish Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star Medal, and other awards. He retired from the Air Force in 1983.

John F. Baker, Jr.
9/1/2002 – 8/31/2004
South Carolina

Mr. Baker is a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient who served in the U. S. Army from 1966 through October 1989. During his career in the Army, he trained military and civilian personnel on numerous computer hardware and software issues and applications. He is employed at the Columbia Veterans Affairs Medical Center where he is responsible for computer installations, maintenance and repair as well as security issues related to this equipment.

Leo P. Burke
9/1/2001 – 8/31/2005
California

Mr. Burke served from 1998 – 1999 as National Vice Commander of The American Legion. He served in World War II in the U. S. Marine Corps and has been a member of The American Legion since 1959. Although retired, Mr. Burke has chaired the California Veterans Board since 1986 and is active in many charitable organizations.

Robert L. (Bob) Cardenas
9/1/2001 – 8/31/2005
California

Brigadier General Cardenas began his military career in the Army Coast Artillery and then became a pilot in the Army Air Corps. He became a test pilot in 1945 and was the Operations Officer and the command pilot of the B-29 that launched Chuck Yeager into supersonic flight. After serving in the Pentagon as Chief of the Aircraft and Missile Programs Division, he was made Chief of The Special Operations Division at U. S. Strike Command Headquarters. After retiring from the military, he worked in private industry. In September 2002, General Cardenas was inducted into the Air Commando Hall of Fame.

Roland F. Cinciarelli
9/1/2001 – 8/31/2005
California

Brigadier General Cinciarelli served in the U. S. Army and the Marine Corps. He served in many assignments, including Vietnam. In 1980, he was assigned as Special Assistant to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Logistics Base in California. Prior to being placed on the inactive Reserve status in 1982, General Cinciarelli's assignment was Deputy Commanding General, Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany, Georgia.

George S. Cramer
3/1/2002 – 2/28/2004
Illinois

George Cramer served in the U. S. Army, including 14 months in Vietnam, where he was an artillery surveyor. He retired as Art Director of Advertising in private industry. He has been active all levels in the VFW and participated in many WWII commemoration ceremonies. In addition, he established co-sponsorship of the Golden Age Games between the VFW and VA. He is currently serving as the Assistant Director for the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Wilfred Ebel
9/1/2003 – 8/31/2005
California

Wil Ebel served in political appointments in Washington, DC, under Presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and George H.W. Bush. He retired from the military as a colonel in 1985 after 37 years of service in the U.S. Army, Army Guard and Army Reserve. He served as Director, National Cemetery System, 1987 – 1989.

Katherine Frazer
9/1/2002 – 8/31/2004
Florida

Ms. Frazer worked in a variety of positions in private industry for many years, as well as with the Federal government. She has served in various positions in Gold Star Wives of America and currently is a Legislative Committee representative. Ms. Frazer also volunteers at many local organizations, including many hospitals.

John A. Kelly
9/1/2004 – 8/31/2006
District of Columbia

Mr. Kelly retired as a Major after 28 years of active and reserve service. He is a registered lobbyist in New York, North Carolina, Maryland, and Washington, DC and is currently CEO of Kelly and Associates, Inc., a Washington based government and public affairs firm that he founded in 1986. At present, he serves as the principal federal and state representative for Perdue Farms Inc.; BMW Group LLC; and BMW's three subsidiaries, the National Association of Settlement Purchasers, and the Academic Medicine Development Corporation, and he provides legislative and strategic counsel to Qwest Communications.

Carl R. Kikerpill
3/1/2004 – 2/28/2006
California

Mr. Kikerpill served as an officer in the U.S. Army and Army Reserve. He has been active in his community serving in church leadership positions and has participated in annual church mission trips to various developing countries around the world. He is a graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point and also earned a Master of Science Degree in Management from Troy State University. He is currently employed at Deloitte & Touché, LLP, as Business Development Manager where he is responsible for helping clients implement IT enabled business solutions.

Mylio S. Kraja
9/1/2001 – 8/31/2005
Mississippi

Mr. Kraja served in World War II in the Navy and then had a career in private industry, including as a Registered Representative of the New York Stock Exchange. Mr. Kraja joined The American Legion in 1947. From 1981 to 1990, he served as the Executive Director of The American Legion's Washington, DC, office. He has also been active in several local civic and fraternal organizations.

Jerry L. Laws, Chair
9/1/2002 – 8/31/2005
New Mexico

Brigadier General Laws served in the U. S. Army for over 30 years in posts and positions all over the world. He retired from the U. S. Army in July 1998 with over 30 years of service. He was President and CEO of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce until July 2000 when he took a job in private industry. He is very active in many local civic organizations.

Thomas G. Lockhart
9/01/03 – 8/31/2005
Arizona

Mr. Lockhart is a U.S. Air Force Veteran. During his 26-year military career, he held a number of operational assignments in tactical fighter units including two combat tours in Southeast Asia. He also served on the U. S. Air Force Inspector General Team and as chief of tactical evaluations and exercises for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Italy.

Eugene R. Manfrey
9/1/2002 – 8/31/2004
Florida

Mr. Manfrey retired from a VA Regional Office where he was employed as a Veterans Benefits Counselor and Field Examiner with over 30 years of service. He served in the National Guard and also the U. S. Army. He has served in many local, state, and national positions for the VFW. In 2000, he was appointed Chairman of the National Legislative Committee. Mr. Manfrey is active in many local civic and fraternal organizations.

Ronald H. Markarian
9/1/2004 – 8/31/2005
California

Major General Markarian began his military career with the Army National Guard and subsequently entered the U. S. Air Force. After 30 years military service, he retired as a Colonel and became a member of the California State Military Reserve, where he served in several capacities. He later retired as Major General after nearly 46 years of military service. He has been active in county and state political affairs, as well as many military, veteran, and public service organizations. He currently serves as the California State Director for the Selective Service System.

Joseph J. Martory
9/1/2003 – 8/31/2005
Florida

Mr. Martory served during the Vietnam War in the U. S. Navy. He then worked in private industry for many years. In 2000, he was elected chairman of the State of Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. He is active in many local civic and fraternal organizations.

Nancy T. Norton
9/1/2001 – 8/31/2004
District of Columbia

Ms. Norton served in the U. S. Navy for many years, serving in several operational and supervisory positions. She has been working in private industry for many years, as well as working in the political environment.

Benedict J. Spadaro
11/1/2001 – 8/31/2005
New York

Mr. Spadaro served in the U. S. Air Force. He has been active in veterans groups for many years. For the past 38 years, he has been employed by the Town of Eastchester Veterans Service Agency. He is also active in local civic groups.

Shane E. Walsh
9/1/2002 – 8/31/2004
Texas

Mr. Walsh served in the U. S. Army in various leadership positions. He is now working in private industry.

Ex-Officio Members

Edwin C. Bearss
District of Columbia
[Representing the National Park Service]

Edwin "Ed" Bearss is a 48-year veteran of government service. He served during WWII with the 3rd Marine Raider Battalion and 1st Marine Division in the invasions of Guadalcanal and New Britain. He was wounded in the latter landing and was hospitalized for 26 months. He studied at Georgetown University where he received a B.S. in Foreign Service in 1949 and at Indiana University for his M.A. in History in 1955. He began his National Park Service career as Park Historian in Vicksburg, Mississippi. In 1981, after transferring to Washington, DC, he became the Service's Chief Historian. Throughout his career, he has been the recipient of numerous awards in the field of history and preservation. Currently, Mr. Bearss serves as Historian Emeritus, National Park Service.

Tom Sole
District of Columbia
[Representing the American Battle Monuments Commission]

Tom Sole joined the ABMC staff at Arlington Virginia on July 1, 2002, as the Director of Engineering and Maintenance. He is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, and the University of Chicago where he earned an M.A. He is also a graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College.

John C. (Jack) Metzler, Jr.
Virginia

[Representing Arlington National Cemetery]

After being cemetery director of several VA national cemeteries, Mr. Metzler was Area Director of the National Cemetery System for the Northeast Region. In 1991, he was appointed Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery. He served in the US Army from 1966-69, including a tour of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter crew chief for which he received numerous awards and commendations.